



Office of the Mayor

NEWS RELEASE

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Noon

Crews move in, new Fire Station No. 2 goes online today

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South Bend's newest fire station serves as a testimonial to the early 20th-century architectural heritage of its surrounding neighborhoods and to the 21st-century economic growth that funded more than half of its relocation and construction cost.

A \$2.1-million Fire Station No. 2, located at 402 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, will officially go online today (July 2, 2007) as firefighters move equipment and calls are transferred from the current Fire Station No. 2 at 120 E. Marion St. The relocation was prompted by the growth of Memorial Hospital, which is acquiring the former Station No. 2 for \$1.2 million in order to facilitate the hospital's future expansion and development.

The antique green and gold-colored décor of the firehouse with its wraparound porch, fencing, and architectural scaling belies the high-tech features that pack the facility. It boasts a high-speed connection via the Metronet to the city's computer server and features that only exist at the South Bend Fire Department's Central station headquarters.

"Fire Station No. 2 may look like an old-fashioned firehouse, but this fully modern facility beautifully depicts the character of the neighborhood it will serve," said Mayor Stephen J. Luecke. "When neighbors meet firefighters on their front porch, they'll know that this station is ready to respond in minutes to key sections of the city, including the downtown and the hospitals."

The new station at the southeast corner of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and Lincolnway West provides a more central location within the district, reflecting strategic planning by the city and the fire department for optimum response times for all emergencies, already under 5 minutes.

“It’s a great fit in the community,” said Fire Chief Howard Buchanon, who managed the construction project before becoming chief in April. “We had outgrown Station No. 2 for some time.”

The new 17,000-square-foot station more than doubles the square footage of the existing station, which had about 7,000 square feet. As the second largest station in the city and the only one with three bays (other than Central), Fire Station No. 2 receives 100 to 200 calls monthly, vying with Central for the most calls. The new station also will be the only facility besides Central to have its own air compressor to refill air canisters.

Fire Station No. 2 will house Medic Unit No. 3, Battalion Chief No. 103, Engine No. 2, Boat No. 1 with tow vehicle, and a reserve rescue ambulance. Twenty-one firefighters (seven per shift) will be stationed there. A staff office will enable the battalion chief to deploy personnel from Station No. 2, rather than traveling to the Central Station for that work.

“This will be more convenient,” Buchanon said.

Buchanon thanked Mayor Luecke; Public Works Director Gary Gilot, City Engineer Carl Littrell and Public Construction Manager Toy Villa; Memorial Hospital; South Bend Heritage Foundation and the Lincolnway West Commercial Corridor steering committee for their assistance with the project.

In addition to \$1.2 million in funding, Memorial, the city’s largest employer, also paid in 2001 for an architect to update the Fire Department’s master plan for the best location for Station 2. The plan previously had been updated in 1996.

South Bend Heritage Foundation and the Lincolnway West committee worked on site development for the new station, including acquisition, demolition and environmental remediation. They also provided funding for a third bay for the unit, Buchanon said, which enables each company to respond from its own bay and the rescue boat to be connected and ready for response at all times. The project began in January 2006 with Wakarusa-based Brown & Brown General Contractors serving as general contractor based on a design by MPA Architects of South Bend.

An official dedication ceremony for Fire Station No. 2 is being planned for late summer with a public open house of the facility on Sunday, Oct. 7 in conjunction with Fire Prevention Week activities.

The change in station locations also will eliminate a daily detour faced by the existing Station No. 2. Firefighters previously had to drive west on Marion to Michigan Street and then travel back east on LaSalle to respond to any calls east of the St. Joseph River.

Since becoming a professional fire department in 1887, the South Bend Fire Department has grown to 248 sworn firefighters. During Luecke’s tenure as mayor, Fire Station No. 2 represents the third new fire station constructed, including the Central Fire Station, 1222 S. Michigan St., and Fire Station No. 10, 5303 York Road.